



Births to Single Mothers

Clark County and Washington State, 1992 through 2001

Why we should care:

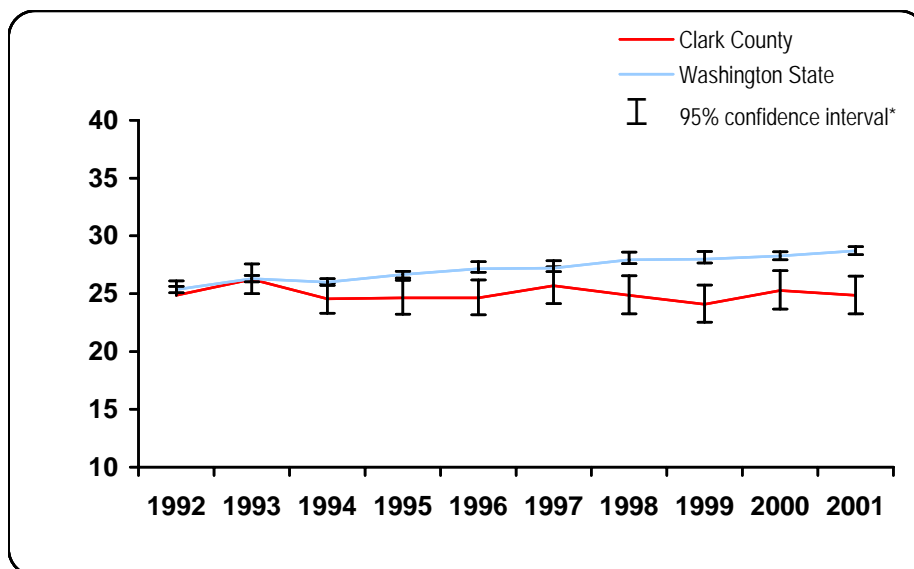
Single mothers with dependent children have the highest rate of poverty across all demographic groups. (1) Approximately 60% of U.S. children living in mother-only families live in poverty compared to only 11% of children living in two-parent families. (2) Paternal involvement impacts maternal and infant health regardless of marital status. Recent studies have shown that the absence of the father's name on the birth certificate is more indicative of health risk for the infant than mother's marital status. (3)

Status:

- The percent of births to single mothers in Clark County has almost doubled from 14% (of total births) in 1981 to 25% (of total births) in 2001. (4,5)
- The percent of births to single mothers in Clark County has remained below the percent in Washington State since 1990 and has been significantly lower since 1996. (4,5)
- One out of three births occurred to unmarried women in the United States compared to one out of four in Clark County in 1999. (6,4)

What we can do:

- Promote and support policies and legislation that reduce the economic insecurity of children living in single-parent families. (7)
- Target absence of father's name as another risk factor to reach at-risk families. (3)
- Support efforts that promote shared parenting and financial responsibilities between mothers and fathers. (7)
- Support policies and legislation that increase the availability of quality programs for child care, health care, and income security for all children and all parents. (7)



Clark County				Washington State			
Year	% of Births to Single Mothers			Year	% of Births to Single Mothers		
	Mothers	95% CI*	Number		Mothers	95% CI*	Number
1992	24.9	(23.4, 26.5)	995	1992	25.4	(25.0, 25.7)	20,175
1993	26.2	(24.7, 27.9)	1,083	1993	26.3	(26.0, 26.7)	20,692
1994	24.6	(23.1, 26.1)	1,065	1994	26.0	(25.7, 26.4)	20,075
1995	24.7	(23.2, 26.1)	1,123	1995	26.7	(26.3, 27.0)	20,541
1996	24.6	(23.2, 26.1)	1,164	1996	27.2	(26.8, 27.5)	21,101
1997	25.7	(24.3, 27.1)	1,268	1997	27.2	(26.8, 27.6)	21,200
1998	24.9	(23.5, 26.3)	1,276	1998	27.9	(27.6, 28.3)	22,206
1999	24.1	(22.8, 25.5)	1,245	1999	28.0	(27.6, 28.4)	22,170
2000	25.3	(24.0, 26.7)	1,368	2000	28.3	(27.9, 28.6)	22,816
2001	24.9	(23.5, 26.2)	1,323	2001	28.7	(28.3, 29.1)	22,806

*If the confidence intervals for state and county overlap in a given year, there is no significant difference between these rates.

See back side for sources.



Sources: (1) Olson, S.I., & Banyard, V. (1993). "Stop the world so I can get off for a while: Sources of daily stress in the lives of low-income single mothers of young children." *Family Relations*, 42, 50-56. (2) Kirby, J. (1995, Spring). Single-parent Families in Poverty: The Ohio State University. (3) James A. Gaudino Jr., Bill Jenkins, and Roger W. Rochat (1999). "No father's names: a risk factor for infant mortality in the State of Georgia, USA " *Social Science & Medicine*, 48, 253-265. (4) *Vital Registration System, Annual Statistics Files, Births 1980-2001*. [Data file]. Olympia, WA: Washington State Department of Health, Center for Health Statistics. (5) Public Health: Seattle & King County, Epidemiology, Planning, & Evaluation. (1991-2003). *VistaPHw* 2.3.2, 2002 [Computer software for public health assessment]. Seattle, WA. (6) Ventura, S.J., Bachrach, C. A. Nonmarital Childbearing in the United States, 1940-1999. National Vital Statistics Reports Vol. 48 no. 16. Hyattsville, Maryland: National Center for Health Statistics. 2000. (7) McLanahan, S. (1994, June 23). "The Consequences of Single Motherhood," *The American Prospect*, 5, No. 18.